

My Impressions of India and its people

When I first arrived and was driving through Mumbai; the traffic, the amount of it and everyone weaving in and out, cars, lorries, buses, motorbikes, mopeds, bicycles, all vying for a space to move forward, almost no helmets on the bikers, children riding, some on their mother's laps. People walking along the roads and crossing in between the traffic; everyone honking as loud as can be. The lorries were beautifully painted and had HOEN PLEASE OK written on the back.

I saw lots of broken down buildings, rubble, debris and litter along the sides of the roads, almost no pavements, people trying to trade and live amongst all this, people who looked beautifully turned out, clean, happy, chatty and getting on with their daily lives.

2 weeks in India

Almost every single person that I have met in India, has been smiling and cheerful, helpful and welcoming, curious and inventive, generous and full of fun. India seems vast to me, each city seems to go on forever, and even outside the city limits, until the actual rural parts, still endless amounts of traffic and people. I love the sound of the cicadas at night and the chatter of the birds.

The group of people I spent most of my time with, at the Science Centre in IUCAA, are the most amazing people; they are very hard working and very focused on their tasks, but they are so warm and flexible in their approach to what they do, which encourages all comers to the science centre, teachers, pupils and visitors alike, to feel welcome and able to ask questions all the time, knowing that

2

nothing is too much ~~\$~~ or too difficult. They all work together in an incredibly integrated way, bringing each of their talents together under the caring eyes of Arvind, who stretches them and encourages them to explore and invent and not to be afraid to try and maybe sometimes fail. This attitude is imbedded with the children so that worry is not an option.

With this kind of guidance and nurturing, if taken up throughout the whole country, I think India will flourish, with the added social advantages of doing more recycling, not dropping litter, and maybe driving on the left and passing on the right, within the structures of so much traffic; maybe less hawking might happen. The Indian people deserve better living conditions; ~~because~~ apart from the acceptable, they are incredibly resilient and rise above adversity and should be more

4

considered by the powers that be.

This is not meant to be patronising, because I believe every human being in the world should live in decent conditions.

One of the most endearing habits of an Indian, is to shake his or her head when in agreement.

you smile when you could be sad
you laugh when you could be mad
you rise above the mundane
you put some of us to shame
What a wonderful race
Full of joy and grace.

30/ September 2010

Lynne Susan Storrar